

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated July 14, 2009. Claims 1, 3-18 and 20 are pending. Claims 1 and 3-18 stand rejected in the outstanding Office Action. Claims 1 and 3-18 have been amended. Claim 19 has been cancelled. New claim 20 has been added.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to consider the Information Disclosure Statement filed herewith.

The rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as allegedly being unpatentable over Ishikawa et al. (US 5,509,973), is respectfully traversed.

Amended claim 1 recites “the edge face sealing member *itself*, which is an integral frame-like shape, is *formed along with an outer shape of the solar cell module body*...while the solar cell module body is captured within the edge face sealing member *along an entire edge portion perimeter thereof*, the upper sealing region, the lower sealing region and the side sealing region are coming into intimate contact with the solar cell module body, and the edge face sealing member *seals the entire edge portion perimeter of the solar cell module body*”. Support for the amendment can be found, for example, in Fig. 1 and paragraph [0042] of the instant specification. Ishikawa fails to teach or suggest these features.

Ishikawa discloses a support frame for solar batteries used in roof panels. The support frame includes a solar battery 4 (see Fig. 3), which is supported by grading channel members 5 detachably fitted on the four edges of the solar battery 4. A frame 3 is detachably mounted around the grading channel members 5 and consists of four frame members, i.e., an upper and lower frame member 6 and 7 and a pair of vertical frame members 8 (Fig. 5, col. 4, lines 13-21). Each grading channel member 5 is a channel-shaped member into which an edge of the solar battery 4 is fitted. It has a substantially flat inner wall portion 9, side wall portions 10 and a head

portion 11, and a pair of tongue portions integrally extending from the inner surfaces of the side wall portions 10 toward each other (col. 4, lines 22-32). Also, the inner wall portion 9 has ribs 9a extending slightly outward relative to the side wall portions 10 (Fig. 2). When the solar battery is fitted into the channel members 5, the surfaces of the inner wall portion 9 are held against and in close contact with the edge of the solar battery 4. In addition, the tongues 12 are elastically deformed by the inserted edge of the solar battery 4, and their edges are in close contact with the solar battery edge (col. 4, lines 44-54).

The Examiner has identified the channel members 5 as the claimed edge face sealing member. However, with the above amendment, it is made clear that that the edge face sealing member itself is an integral frame-like shaped, and is formed along with an outer shape of the solar cell body (see Fig. 1). In other words, the integral frame-like shape consists of one member. In contrast, in Ishikawa, there are separate members 5 which capture the four edges of the solar cell 4 (Fig. 5).

Moreover, with the above amendment, it is made clear that the edge face sealing member seals an entire edge portion perimeter of the solar cell module body. In contrast, in Ishikawa, none of the members 5 seals an entire edge portion perimeter of the solar cell (Fig. 5).

Applicant submits that the edge face sealing member shown in Fig. 5 of Ishikawa, like the conventional art, cannot solve the problem addressed by the present invention. Particularly, in Japanese Application H13-230440, cited in the specification, waterproofing members are inserted along each side only. Hence, the conventional art, like Ishikawa, fails to seal the entire edge portion perimeter of the solar cell module body, and therefore fails to have the water tightness effect of the present invention, especially the water tightness effect in all areas, including each side and each corner.

In contrast, in Ishikawa, the edge face sealing member, by combining a plurality of members, causes water leakage from the combined portions, and thus fails to have the water tightness effect.

Further, the edge face sealing member itself is the integral frame like shape, and does not comprise a plurality of members attached to each other to form a whole.

For the above reasons, claim 1 is allowable. Claim 14 includes limitations similar to those of claim 1, and is also allowable.

New claim 20 recites the new feature that when the edge face sealing member is captured within the frame body, an entire surface of the edge face sealing member which faces the solar cell module body is coming into intimate contact with the entire edge portion perimeter of the solar cell module body.

Ishikawa fails to teach this feature, since an entire surface of the member 5 is not coming into intimate contact with the entire edge portion perimeter of the solar cell 4. Moreover, in Stein (US 5,071,491), the edge face sealing member fails to seal the entire edge portion perimeter of the solar cell module body during the contact. In Stein, sealing intends to cover the solar cell module body with the edge face sealing member shown in Fig. 5. Hence, Applicant submits that the claimed sealing in claim 20 is different from the covering of Stein.

In view of the foregoing and other considerations, all claims are deemed in condition for allowance. A formal indication of allowability is earnestly solicited.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge the undersigned's deposit account #14-1140 in whatever amount is necessary for entry of these papers and the continued pendency of the captioned application.

Should the Examiner feel that an interview with the undersigned would facilitate allowance of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By: /Leonidas Boutsikaris/
Leonidas Boutsikaris
Reg. No. 61,377

LB:tlm
901 North Glebe Road, 11th Floor
Arlington, VA 22203-1808
Telephone: (703) 816-4000
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100